

In the Claims

Please enter amendments to the following claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:

determining at a [head-end and] data center whether to inform a user [one or more users] of an interactive television service of alternate [available] content, the user [one or more users] connected with the [head-end and] data center via a network;

responsive to determining to inform the user of the alternate [available] content, generating a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the alternate content; and

inserting the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the user [one or more users] from the head-end and data center via the network;

wherein the determining is independent of any request by the user for the alternate content, but based at least in part on a search for alternate content having subject matter that is related to subject matter of content being viewed by the user when the search is conducted.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining at the [a head-end and] data center whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content is based on results of a search of programming information.

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3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, wherein determining at the [a head-end and] data center whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available content] further comprises [comprising] performing a search of one or more Internet web sites.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, wherein performing the [a] search of one or more web sites comprises using the results of the search of programming information.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein determining at the [a head-end and] data center whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content is based on information received during generation of programming information.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the available [alternate] content.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, wherein the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet is transmitted from the [head-end and] data center

as an Internet Protocol [IP] multicast to the user [one or more users] via the network.

8. (currently amended) A [head-end and] data center [system] comprising:

a hot key generation portion to determine whether to inform a user [one or more users] of an interactive television service of alternate [available] content, the user [one or more users] connected with the [head-end and] data center via a network and responsive to determining to inform the user [one or more users] of the alternate [available] content, generating a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the alternate content;

a multiplexor system to insert the hot key signal into a content signal; and

a transport system to transmit the content signal and the hot key signal to the user [one or more users] from the [head-end and] data center via the network;

wherein the hot key generation portion determines whether to inform the user of alternate content independent of any request by the user for the alternate content, but based at least in part on a search for alternate

content having subject matter that is related to subject matter of content being viewed by the user when the search is conducted.

9. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 8, wherein the hot key generation portion comprises means for determining [determines] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content based on results of a search of programming information.

10. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 9, wherein the hot key generation portion comprises means for determining [determines] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content by performing a search of one or more Internet web sites.

11. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 10, wherein the hotkey generation portion further comprises means for performing the [a] search of one or more web sites [comprises] using the results of the search of programming information.

12. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 8, wherein the hot key generation portion comprises means for determining [determines] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive

television service of alternate [available] content based on information received during generation of programming information.

13. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 8, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the alternate content.

14. (currently amended) The data center [system] of claim 13, wherein the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet is transmitted from the [head-end and] data center as an Internet Protocol [IP] multicast to the user [one or more users] via the network.

15. (currently amended) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon a series of instructions, the instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

determine at a [head-end and] data center whether to inform a user [one or more users] of an interactive television service of alternate [available] content, the user [one or more users] connected with the [head-end and] data center via a network;

responsive to determining to inform the user [one or more users] of the alternate [available] content, generate a hot key signal indicating availability [and a location] of the alternate content; and

insert the hot key signal into a content signal transmitted to the user [one or more users] from the [head-end and] data center via the network,

wherein the instructions cause the processor to determine whether to inform the user of alternate content independent of any request by the user for the alternate content, but based at least in part on a search for alternate content having subject matter related to subject matter of content being viewed by the user when the search is conducted.

16. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions cause the processor to determine [determining at a head-end and data center] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content [is] based on results of a search of programming information.

17. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 16, wherein the instructions cause the processor to determine [determining at a head-end and data center] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content based

further on results of [comprising performing] a search of one or more Internet web sites.

18. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 17, wherein the instructions cause the processor to perform [performing] the [a] search of one or more web sites [comprises] using the results of the search of programming information.

19. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the instructions cause the processor to determine [determining at a head-end and data center] whether to inform the user [one or more users] of the [an] interactive television service of alternate [available] content [is] based on information received during generation of programming information.

20. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 15, wherein the hot key signal comprises an Internet Protocol (IP) data packet, the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet having a header portion and a body portion, the body portion having a data field indicating a location of the alternate content.

21. (currently amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 20, wherein the Internet Protocol [IP] data packet is transmitted from the [head-

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end and] data center as an Internet Protocol [IP] multicast to the user [one or more users] via the network.